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Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 AID-20 DRC-01 SR-02 ORM-03 /144 W
---------- 070426
R 121023Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6503
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 14273

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, TH, SRFF, CB
SUBJECT: THAI VIEWS ALONG CAMBODIAN BORDER

FOLLOWING RECEIVED ACTION BANGKOK FROM UDORN SEP 10. REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION. QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L UDORN 108

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH, SREF, CB

SUBJECT: THAI VIEWS ALONG CAMBODIAN BORDER

1. SUMMARY. VISITED BORDER PROVINCES BURIRAM, SURIN, SISAKET AND UBON SEPT 3 - 7 TO CHECK ON THAI REACTION TO SITUATION IN CAMBODIA AND AWARENESS OF INSURGENT ACTIVITY AT HOME. CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS THAT ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT (RTG) HAD ORDERED FORCES ALONG BORDER TO GO ON ALERT BEACUSE OF CAMBODIAN SITUATION, PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS TOLD US NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES HAD BEEN MADE RECENTLY IN DEPLOYMENT RTG FORCES. ALSO CONTRARY TO EARLIER STATEMENTS BY SISAKET GOVERNOR REPORTED IN PRESS, REFUGEES FROM CAMBODIA HAVE NOT SO FAR POSED MAJOR PROBLEM. HE TOLD US THAT 1300 HAD COME ACROSS LAST TWO MONTHS BUT HAD MOSTLY SETTLED WITH
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RELATIVES AND NOT CAUSING DRAIN ON RTG RESOURCES. IN RECENT WEEKS

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HE SAID FLOW OF REFUGEES HAD ALMOST STOPPED. ALL PROVINCES CONTINUE HAVE SOME DAILY MOVEMENT BACK AND FORTH ACROSS BORDER FOR TRADE. ALTHOUGH THAI GENERALLY CONCERNED ABOUT EVENTS IN CAMBODIA, THEY DO NOT PERCEIVE IMMEDIATE THREAT IN BORDER PROVINCES. THEY WORRIED, HOWEVER, THAT IF SITUATION IN CAMBODIA DETERIORATES FURTER CAMBODIAN SPEAKING THAI WILL BE TARGET FOR COMMUNIST POLITICAL ACTIVITIES DIRECTED FROM OTHER SIDE OF BORDER. SISAKET GOVERNOR, HOWEVER, FELT CAMBODIAN SPEAKING THAI ALREADY TARGET FOR POLITICAL WORK BY INDIGENOUS CT. END SUMMARY.

2. BURIRAM. TALKED WITH DISTRICT OFFICIALS IN PRAKHON CHAI AND BNA KRUAT WHO SAID NO NEW DEPLOYMENT OF RTG FORCES IN AREA AND NO SIG-NIFICANT INFLUX OF REFUGEES. BORDER PATROL POLICE (BPP) CONTINUE TO PATROL AS BEFORE WITH NO SIGNIFICANT CONTACT. VILLAGE DEFENSE CORPS (VDC) MOST OF WHOM SPEAK THAI AND CAMBODIAN ASSISTING BPP AT BORDER CROSSING POINTS TO CHECK FOR STRANGERS AND SUSPICIOUS CHARACTERS. OFFICIALS SAID COMMUNIST POLITICAL ACTIVITIES DIRECTED AT CAMBODIAN SPEAKING THAI MANY OF WHOM SQUATTERS ON NATIONAL FOREST RESERVE LAND. OFFICIALS BELIEVE FREQUENT BORDER CROSSINGS BY RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF CAMBODIAN SPEAKERS IN THAILAND FACILITATE COMMUNIST MASS WORK.

3. BAN KRUAT ONE OF FOUR DISTRICTS IN BURIRAM TO HAVE SPECIAL BORDER UNITS CALLED "JUNGLE BEES" UNDER COMMUNIST SPPRESSION OPERATIONS COMMAND (CSCC). (OTHERS ARE LAHAN SAI, NANG RONG, AND PRAKHON CHAI.) DISTRICT OFFICER (DO) SAID JUNGLE BEE UNIT INCLUDES ABOUT 30 MEN SOME EX KHMER ROUGE, OTHERS EX-CONVICTS AND EX-MILITARY. VISITED JUNGLE BEE CAMP IN BAN KRUAT ABOUT 6 KM FROM BORDER. ONLY 10 "BEE" IN CAMP OTHERS SAID TO BE DOWN WITH MALARIA. OF 10 ONLY 4 ARMED (M-1 RIFLES) THEY SHORT OF AMMUNITION AND MEDICINE. BEES HAVE REGULAR RADIO CONTACT WITH DISTRICT OFFICE.

4. SURIN. GOVERNOR SANGUAN SARITANON TOLD US NO REFUGEE PROBLEM, NO CT ACTIVITY, AND NO NEW RTG DEPLOYMENT IN SURIN. DEPUTY CHIEF PROVINCIAL POLICE SAID FROM MID-AUGUST TO 4 SEPTEMBER PROVINCIAL POLICE (PP) ASSIST BPP IN PATROLLING BORDER WITH NO CONTACT OR SIGHTINGS. HE SAID ABOUT 160 PERSONS CROSS BORDER DAILY TO BARTER AND SELL AND RETURN AT NIGHT. LIKE DO IN BURIRAM, HE MADE POINT THAT PEOPLE ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER SPEAK CAMBODIAN AND IT DIFFICULT TO TELL WITHOUT CHECKING ID CARDS WHETHER THEY THAI OR CAMBODIAN.
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AS IN BURIRAM, VDC ASSISTING BPP AT BORDER CROSSING POINTS. NEITHER GOVERNOR NOR POLICE INDICATED KNOWLEDGE OF ANY CT ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY IN SURIN AS DESCRIBED BY CT DEFECTOR IN UBON.

5. SISAKET. GOVERNOR SAID 1300 REFUGEES CAME OVER DURING JULY AND AUGUST BUT MOVEMENT HAS ABOUT STOPPED. MOST REFUGEES LIVING WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN KHU KHAN AND KANTARALAK DISTRICTS.

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GOVERNOR CONCERNED THAT CT CONDUCTING ORGANIZATIONAL WORK AND MAYBE RECRUITING AMONG CAMBODIAN SPEAKING THAI. HE SAID NO NEW RTG DEPLOYMENT IN SISAKET AND NO CT MILITARY ACTIVITY. ALSO SAID 40 KHMER ROUGE (KR) TRIED TO DEFECT TO AUTHORITIES IN SISAKET IN EARLY AUGUST. GOVERNOR TURNED THEM OVER TO COMMANDER OF CAMBODIAN COMPANY ON KHAOPHRAWIHAN WHO SENT THEM TO PHNOM PENH.

6. DO IN KANTARALAK TOLD US ABOUT 800 REFUGEES WHO CAME OVER IN LAST TWO MONTHS NOW LIVING WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES ON NATIONAL FOREST RESERVE LAND. HE SAID INSPECTION TEAMS FROM DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY WHICH CAME IN LAST WEEK AGREED WITH HIM THAT SITUATION TOO FAR ADVANCED TO SOLVE BY ARRESTING SQUATTERS AND THAT AS LONG AS THEY NOT CAUSING TROUBLE IT BEST TO LEAVE THEM THERE. HE ALSO WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE KR OR CT INFILTRATION IN AREAS WHERE CAMBODIAN SPEAKING THAI LIVED, BUT SAID HE AT LEAST THANKFUL HIS PROBLEM CAMBODIAN RATHER THAN VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. HAMILTON
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